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ABSTRACT

The Rural Education Improvement Project of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools presents its second annual report relative to a 5-year rural education improvement program funded by the Noyes Foundation and the Danforth Foundation. The purposes of the program are reported as (1) the identification of effective means of interrupting the deficit cycle of the rural disadvantaged pupil, (2) the demonstration of the child-family-ccmmunity-school interrelationship, and (3) the importance of blending research findings of college and university personnel with know-how of elementary and secondary educators. Results of the project are examined for each of the 3 rural education centers (1 in Tennessee, 1 in Florida, and 1 in Georgia) involved in the program, and a master financial report is presented. (BD)

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A COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RURAL EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Overton County, Tennessee
Wewahitchka, Florida
Wheeler County, Georgia

To

The Danforth Foundation
St. Louis, Missouri

By

The Education Improvement Project Staff,
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Atlanta, Georgia

December, 1969

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Foreword

This is the second in a series of comprehensive annual reports relative to the five-year rural education improvement program sponsored by the Education Improvement Project of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and jointly funded by the Danforth Foundation and the Noyes Foundation.

Concerned about the inappropriate program of formal education available to many rural pupils and interested in action programs of educational improvement geared to the elimination or at least alleviation of this inappropriateness, the Danforth Foundation and the Noyes Foundation responded favorably to a proposal request from the Education Improvement Project and committed $1,347,845* and $159,000** respectively to a five year project designed to interrupt the vicious cycle of educational disadvantage in which many rural pupils have been trapped for so long.

The Noyes Foundation grant (effective, 1966) which finances the teacher education component of the project, preceded the Danforth Foundation grant (effective, 1967) which funds the other interventions in the program. Thus the in-service and pre-service

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*This includes $7,500 for a rural project planning grant, $195,300 for central office coordination of the rural center programs, and $1,145,045 for local project operation in the three rural centers.

**This includes $150,000 for a teacher education program and $9,000 for a special microteaching project.

education aspect of the project began operation one year before the total project was initiated. This necessitated an initial report to the Noyes Foundation at the close of the school year 1966-1967 relative to the pre-service and in-service education intervention of the project. During the 1967-1968 school year the remaining components in the project (financed by the Danforth Foundation grant) became operative. This report therefore is the second comprehensive annual accounting of the project in terms of the joint five year grant of $15,516,324.

This report has been prepared in three parts. Part I includes a brief description of the project's rationale, organization, purposes, pupil enrollment and intervention components, operation, and sources of funding. Part II presents data relative to the project's productivity — the project results. Part III is a master financial report of the project for 1968-1969.

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PART I

THE RATIONALE; ORGANIZATION; PURPOSES; PUPIL ENROLLMENT AND INTERVENTION COMPONENTS; PROJECT OPERATION; SOURCES OF FUNDING

The Rationale

America's image as an agrarian society is yielding to a culture pattern that is highly industrial and technical. However, there are and will remain significant pockets of rural dwellers whose contributions to American culture are significant. In these rural areas a focal point for the development of the appropriate social behavior is the public school; it is or may be the center of the community.

Recent technological, scientific, and cultural developments seem to suggest that the educational competence necessary for today's world is unattainable in the conventionally operated rural school. Yet, the pupils in these schools deserve an opportunity to achieve the education commonly referred to as the birthright of all Americans.

America is becoming increasingly more sensitive to the necessity of an adequate education for all of its citizens. This is evidenced by the large number of educational improvement programs currently in operation. However, most attention and activity in this connection have been focused on urban areas. The reasons for this are obvious. The most noticeable symptoms of educational deprivation occur in the areas of urban blight. The great concentrations of disadvantaged pupils are to be found there. Very little in a special way has been done, particularly in the deep south, to improve education in the rural areas, which areas manifest a combination of limitations, directly or indirectly related to education. Glaringly noticeable among these limitations are

distance from urban centers, lack of adquate financial support, inadequacy of teachers, lack of creative educational leadership, and small pupil populations in spite of efforts at consolidation. Other equally obvious limitations are inadequate administrative structure for securing federal and foundation subsidies, insufficient college and university assistance, and a paucity of cultural enrichment opportunities.

The problem of limited educational opportunities in the rural areas of the south is not, moreover, an isolated one. It has a direct relationship to the problem of the metropolitan areas. The farm districts and small towns of the south are some of the principal sources of migrants to the slums and gray areas of the cities. For instance, it is estimated that about 2,700 Negroes per month arrive in Chicago, mostly from the deep south. This migration is significant to urban centers in the south, such as Atlanta, Birmingham, New Orleans and Memphis. The cultural limitations of these newcomers have in part created problems in the cities and will continue to breed these problems as the predicted migration continues. Alleviation of the educational problems in rural areas will assist in the solution of these problems, either by helping to provide in the rural areas some of the educational and cultural advantage which migrants seek by moving to the cities, and thus encouraging less movement to the cities, or by aiding the migrant to enter the city better equipped to cope with the new situation.

The necessity for the appropriate education for all of America's school citizens is so compelling in this 20th century that the limitations of any geographical area can no longer justify inadequate programs of formal education at the public school level.

It might be concluded then that what is really needed in the rural areas is the ability and willingness on the part of school officials to overcome, insofar as possible, the limitations of the rural school and at the same time capitalize effectively on its inherent strengths. This means that if pupils in the rural areas of the deep south are to receive an education commensurate with their needs, interests, and abilities, programs of educational improvement proportionate to those operating in urban centers must be provided. This is the high purpose to which this rural school improvement program, conceived and sponsored by the Education Improvement Project of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and funded jointly by the Danforth and Noyes Foundations, is committed.

Organization

The Rural Education Improvement Project sponsored by the Education Improvement Project of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is a consortium of educational institutions, organizations and agencies collaborating in an effort to improve the educational performance of disadvantaged pupils in rural areas from pre-school through high school. The project currently includes a program in one rural center in three states (Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee).

CHART I

Sponsoring Agency	Rural Center School System	Cooperating Institutions and Organizations (Name and Location)
EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT Southern Association of Colleges and Schools	Overton County, Tennessee	Tennessee State Dept. of Education Nashville, Tennessee
		Tennessee Tech. State University Cookeville, Tennessee
		Middle Tenn. State University Murfreesboro, Tennessee
	Wewahitchka, Florida	Florida State Dept. of Education Tallahassee, Florida
		Florida A & M State University Tallahassee, Florida
		Florida State University Tallahassee, Florida
		Gulf Coast Junior College Panama City, Florida
	Wheeler County, Georgia	Georgia State Dept. of Education Atlanta, Georgia
		Albany State College Albany, Georgia
		Georgia Southern College Statesboro, Georgia

As may be observed in Chart I, in two instances (Wheeler County, Georgia and Overton County, Tennessee), the project includes the total county public school system. In a third instance (Wewahitchka, Florida), the program is limited to serve one town in the county (Gulf) school system. Chart I also portrays the names and location of all participating institutions, agencies, and organizations in the project.

Purposes

The purposes of the rural education improvement project are:

a. To identify through appropriate vehicles of demonstration the relative effectiveness of a number of interventions designed to interrupt the vicious cycle of accumulated deficits in certain "learning" skills and in certain "learning to learn" skills which disadvantaged pupils in rural areas tend to manifest;

b. To demonstrate the inter-relatedness of the child-family-community-school complex by showing that as rural school youngsters improve their academic performance, parents, teachers, and lay citizens also improve their understanding of and empathy toward these children and the degree of disadvantage they manifest;

c. To demonstrate that when the research findings and theoretical concepts of college and university personnel are blended with the practical know-how of elementary and secondary school educators, the pupils affected reap a combination of benefits which neither university personnel nor public school educators working separately can provide.

Pupil Enrollment and Intervention Components

The 5,875 pupils participating in the rural education program in 1968-1969 had access to a variety of interventions all designed to interrupt the vicious cycle of accumulated learning deficits which have been a part of the experiences of the pupils in this project. As Chart II reveals, the intervention components common to all three centers are: 1) Teacher Education; 2) Communication Skills Development; 3) Family Involvement; 4) Cultural Enrichment; 5) School-Home-Community Agent Service; 6) Non-Professional Staff Aide Service.

Operation

A special rural education staff is responsible for the implementation of the intervention components in the project. This staff includes a project director, a secretary, early childhood education teachers, reading and speech specialists, school-home-community agents, and an evaluator. These staff members work very closely with other school personnel and with representatives from the cooperating colleges and universities and the state department of education in making operative the specific activities and strategies encouched in the project's intervention components.

CHART II

Rural Center	Number of Pupils in Program 1968-1969	Intervention Components in Program
Overton County, Tennessee	3,691	1. Teacher Education (In-Service & Pre-Service) Including principals, supervisors, guidance counselors, classroom teachers, etc. 2. Communication Skills Development 3. Tool Technology and Integrated Industrial Arts 4. Family Involvement 5. Cultural Enrichment 6. School-Home-Community Agent Service 7. Non-Professional Staff Aide Service
Wewahitchka, Florida	813	1. Teacher Education (In-Service & Pre-Service) 2. Communication Skills Development 3. Family Involvement 4. Cultural Enrichment 5. School-Home-Community Agent Service 6. Non-Professional Staff Aide Service
Wheeler County, Georgia	1,371	1. Teacher Education (In-Service & Pre-Service) 2. Communication Skills Development 3. Extended School Year Program 4. Continuous Progress in Learning 5. Integrated Industrial-Technical Education Program 6. Focus on "Learning to Learn" Program 7. Family Involvement 8. Cultural Enrichment 9. School-Home-Community Agent Service 10. Non-Professional Staff Aide Service
Total	5,875	

Sources of Funding

Table I and II show the sources of funding for this project as per each center. As Table II depicts, there is a yearly dimunition in each center's grant. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the cost of financing the project is less with each succeeding year. The second is that a "phasing out" of the grant makes it easier for the local school systems in the respective centers to continue the project when foundation support has been terminated.

TABLE I

Sources of Funding for Three Rural EIP Centers
(Five Year Period)

Grant Intended to Serve	Source of Funds			Total
	Danforth Foundation	Noyes Foundation	US Office of Education	
Overton County, Tennessee Center	350,290	50,000*	-	400,290
Wewahitchka, Florida Center	337,245	50,000*	-	387,245
Wheeler County, Georgia Center	457,510	50,000*	-	507,510
EIP Central Office (Atlanta, Georgia)	202,800	-	-	202,800
Three Rural Centers (Special Microteaching Project)	-	9,000*	9,479*	18,479
Total	1,347,845	159,000	9,479	1,516,324

*Grants for Teacher Education. The $9,000 grant from the Noyes Foundation and the $9,479 grant from the U. S. Office of Education were for the school year 1968-1969 only.

TABLE II

Sources of Foundation Funding for Three Rural EIP Centers (Original Grant)
(Five Year Grant Period - Broken Down on Basis of Each Year's Grant)

Rural EIP Center	Source of Funds	1966-1967	1967-1968	1968-1969	1969-1970	1970-1971	1971-1972	Total
Overton County, Tennessee	Danforth Foundation	-0-	85,900	85,100	72,990	56,880	49,420	350,290
	Noyes Foundation	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-0-	50,000
	Total	10,000	95,900	95,100	82,990	66,880	49,420	400,290
Wewahitchka, Florida	Danforth Foundation	-0-	76,625	75,925	68,940	61,820	53,935	337,245
	Noyes Foundation	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-0-	50,000
	Total	10,000	86,625	85,925	78,940	71,820	53,935	387,245
Wheeler County, Georgia	Danforth Foundation	-0-	128,100	123,300	111,150	94,960	-0-	457,510
	Noyes Foundation	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	-0-	50,000
	Total	10,000	138,100	133,300	121,150	104,960	-0-	507,510
Total	Danforth Foundation	-0-	290,625	284,325	253,080	213,660	103,355	1,145,045
	Noyes Foundation	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	-0-	150,000
	Total	30,000	320,625	314,325	283,080	243,660	103,355	1,295,045

PART II

RURAL EIP PRODUCTIVITY — PROJECT RESULTS

While project design, objectives, strategies, and activities are basic components of an education improvement project, the real "proof of the pudding" is in the project results obtained — the project productivity.

It should be pointed out that this report includes only the second total operation year of a five years project for two centers (a four year project for a third). Thus, the results reported are periodic rather than complete. However the project productivity presented in the sections that follow should provide some information as to the direction the project has taken.

(All Three Centers)

Increases in Pupil Population

It is interesting to note that as shown in Table III, all three centers increased in pupil enrollment from 1967-1968 to 1968-1969. These gains tend to reverse the reported trend that

TABLE III

Rural Center Pupil Populations

Rural Center	Enrollment (1967-1968)	Enrollment (1968-1969)	Amount of Gain
Overton County, Tennessee	3,472	3,691	219
Wewahitchka, Florida	807	813	6
Wheeler County, Georgia	1,334	1,371	37
Total	5,613	5,875	262

rural centers are decreasing each year in pupil population. It seems reasonable to conclude that rural EIP has contributed to this increase in pupil population.

Per-Pupil Cost of Rural EIP

A very important aspect of rural EIP is the low per-pupil cost of the program. As Table IV indicates, the per-pupil cost in one center is the very low amount of $25.77. The average

TABLE IV

Per-Pupil Cost of Rural EIP
(Based on Initial Center Operating Grants)

	Grant for 1968-1969	Number of Pupils	Per-Pupil Cost
Overton County, Tennessee	$ 95,100	3,691	$ 25.77
Wewahitchka, Florida	$ 85,925	813	$105.69
Wheeler County, Georgia	$133,300	1,371	$ 97.23
All Centers	$314,325	5,875	$ 53.50

per-pupil cost for the three centers is only $53.50. The indicated low per-pupil cost and the yearly dimunition in each center's grant tend to support the expectation that the rural centers will continue the proven effective parts of rural EIP when foundation grants have been terminated.

Microteaching Project

The most unique educational feature of rural EIP for 1968-1969 was the microteaching project[1] in which 51 teachers and approximately 1,114 pupils were involved.

[1]A special report - A Demonstration of the Effect of An Adaptation of Microteaching on the Instructional Behavior of Rural School Teachers - describes this project in detail.

The general purpose of this project was to determine the effect of microteaching (utilizing video tape) on the instructional behavior of rural school teachers. Supported by grants from the Noyes Foundation and the U. S. Office of Education, the 51 teachers were given opportunities to teach a series of "micro-lessons" to their classes.

The teachers' instructional performances were recorded on videotape and reviewed by the teacher, by the teacher and a trusted colleague, and by members of a microteaching observation team — in that sequence — for purposes of observation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and discussion.

Ratings were compiled of teacher performance utilizing the Stanford Teacher Competence Appraisal Guide, Ryan's Classroom Observation Record, and the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory.

The following conclusions were drawn from this project:

1. A rural school teacher's opportunity to see and hear his performance in the classroom, as presented on videotape in such an arrangement as this project provided, has a highly significant improvement effect on this teacher's instructional behavior.

2. The variables of sex of teacher, level of teaching (elementary or secondary), and years of teaching experience (five years of less - more than five years) make no significant difference in the improvement of classroom teaching performance gained through a microteaching involvement such as the one utilized in this project.

(Overton County, Tennessee Center)

Teacher Education

At the Overton County project center, 145 teachers in the school system participated in an all-year sensitivity training program. Thirteen teachers participated in a special interaction

analysis program which focused on "The Role of the Teacher in the Classroom." All staff members attended at least one workshop and participated in at least one local, state, or national professional conference.

Communication Skills Development

The pupils in the remedial reading program gained almost two grade levels in one year. It was interesting to observe that the average gain made by remedial readers was greater than that by non-remedial readers in each grade where a comparison could be made.

Family Involvement

More visits to schools were made by parents with the result that parents were better informed about their children's activities. More parents consequently volunteered as "aides."

Cultural Enrichment

Pupils and parents from families of various income levels are enthusiastically participating in and cooperating with the formal and informal cultural activities sponsored by the school.

School-Home-Community Agent Service

A plan for utilizing the services of local civic clubs and organizations was developed. The school-home-community agents are the key staff members in this intervention.

Tool Technology and Integrated Industrial Arts

The innovative aspect of this program was an imaginative and relevant team teaching arrangement involving four teachers from the fields of English, mathematics, social studies, and industrial arts. Some results of the program are: (1) improved school attendance, and (2) improved pupil achievement particularly in English and mathematics.

Non-Professional Aide Service

The Overton County teacher aide program led to the establishment of a Teachers Aides Association.

(Wewahitchka, Florida Center)

Teacher Education

A highlight of the Teacher Education program has been the improvement of the professional status of the teachers. Nineteen, or 23 percent, of the Wewahitchka faculty members possess the master's degree. Of these 19, ten, or more than one-half, earned or completed this degree through the rural EIP teacher education program.

Communication Skills Development

All children improved in reading skills as indicated by Metropolitan Achievement Test Scores. Pupils with particularly poor speech patterns and limited listening and reading skills showed notable improvement. In terms of the Initial Teaching

Alphabet: 19 of 21 pupils showed steady improvement in creativity and spelling; all pupils transferred to tranditonal orthography with very little difficulty; pupils developed independence in reading and writing at an early level.

Family Involvement

It was noted that more parents were making efforts to keep their children in school. There was also a marked increase in communication and cooperation between the school and home.

Cultural Enrichment

An interesting observation was that more pupils began to take an active interest in new hobbies.

School-Home-Community Agent Service

Through the leadership provided by the School-Home-Community Agents, the Wewahitchka Center developed a clothing bank to provide for needy pupils.

Non-Professional Aide Service

The Wewahitchka "aide" program led to the providing of individual tutors and group tutors for pupils needing special help in school subjects.

(Wheeler County, Georgia Center)

Teacher Education

Highlights of the Teacher Education program during the 1968-1969 year at the Wheeler County project center included the following: (1) Eight teachers earned college credit during the

summer of 1968; (2) Nine teachers earned college credit during the school year; (3) Seventeen teachers participated in the microteaching project; (4) More than 20 teachers cooperated in bringing a program in newer teaching media to Wheeler County.

Communication Skills Development

Improvement in pupil reading achievement was reflected in test results from the Claifornia Achievement Battery. Pupil attitude toward school and learning showed improvement by the end of the 1968-1969 school year.

Family Involvement

Some parents who had not finished high school are actively seeking diplomas; one father has returned to college. The instructional program was enhanced by contributions of special resource people from the community.

Cultural Enrichment

Cultural enrichment activities in the Wheeler County center led to the establishement of a children's theatre.

School-Home-Community Agent Services

This program eventuated in the provision of such things as clothing and dental care for needy pupils, thus removing some of the common reasons for absenteeism.

Non-Professional Aide Service

There evolved from this program a "big brother" program for fatherless pupils. In addition, a number of non-professional teacher aides were actively encouraged to seek additional college training.

The Extended School Year Program

For the taxpayer, the basic purpose of the Extended School Year Program is to make better use of the school plant by making it available to teachers, pupils, and parents on a year-round basis.

For pupils and teachers, the basic purpose of the program is twofold: (1) For the superior and average student it provides an opportunity for enrichment and reinforcement and an opportunity to complete the school's educational requirements for graduation in less time than usually required, and (2) For the slow student it provides an opportunity for enrichment, reinforcement, and remediation and the possibility of completing requirements for graduation in at least the usually required time.

The type of extended-year program operated in Wheeler County is a Module Plan, the "module" in this instance being a three-week time period. The time pattern is a "nine-nine" arrangement—nine months (September to June) and nine weeks (June to mid-August). The nine-week period is broken up into modules of three weeks each. Students have the opportunity to choose one, two, or three three-week periods of attendance. Enrollment is voluntary. Credit is

given in keeping with the requirements of the Georgia State Deparmtent of Education and the Wheeler County School System. The school week is the usual five days and the school day runs from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

This program has led to (1) some pupils finishing school in less than the ordinarily required time, (2) a decrease in school absenteeism, (3) an increase in emphases on the individualization of instruction, and (4) a televising of various aspects of the program by the Georgia Educational Television Network.

Focus on "Learning to Learn" Skills

Included in the purposes of this program are the following: improving motivation, raising the level of aspiration, providing contact with models who are achievement-oriented, training in deferred gratification, improving pupils' attention-memory-anticipation span, combating pupil passivity, developing the pupils' appreciation of adults as mature individuals, improving the pupils self-image, and developing the pupils' respect for the activities of peers and teachers.

Some results of this program are (1) a better understanding of disadvantaged pupils by classroom teachers, and (2) an improvement in such aspects of the pupils' affective behavior as motivation, aspiration, and self-image development.

Continued Progress in Learning

This program is being initiated this school year, 1969-1970.

Integrated Industrial-Technical Education Program

This program is being initiated this school year, 1969-1970.

PART III

MASTER FINANCIAL REPORT

COMPOSITE FINANCIAL REPORT
(1968-1969)
Three Rural Centers

Rural Center	Balance at Close of Fiscal Year	Budgeted for 1968-69	Total Available Funds for 1968-69	Expended[1] 1968-69	Balance at Close of 1968-69
Overton County, Tennessee	17,124.71	98,100.00	115,224.71	110,788.95	4,435.76
Wewahitchka, Florida	1,589.47	88,925.00	90,514.47	75,221.35	15,293.12
Wheeler County, Georgia	11,869.52	136,300.00	148,169.52	124,190.81	23,978.71
Total	30,583.70	323,325.00	353,908.70	310,201.11	43,707.59

[1]Does not include expenditures for summer programs after June 30, 1969.